

**Thomas Jefferson to Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch  
Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, May 26, 1807,  
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Ford.**

**TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE J. MSS.**

Washington, May 26, 07.

My Dear Friend, —I am a bad correspondent; but it is not from want of inclination, nor that I do nothing but that having too much to do, I leave undone that which admits delay with least injury. Your letter of Nov. 16 is just now received, and it gives me great pleasure that a person so well acquainted with the localities as M. Pitot has been able to give you so favorable an account of your lands. That his estimates will become just with a little time I believe, but I am also afraid his esteem for you may have misled his judgment into some little anticipation of value. But I speak from ignorance, and he from knolege. I have no doubt Mr. Duplantier will make the best location possible. Indeed his zeal had in one instance led us to fear you would be injured by it. He had comprehended in his location not only the grounds vacant of all title in the vicinity of N. Orleans which had been a principal object in my eye to enable you speedily to raise a sum of money, but also grounds which had been reserved and were necessary for the range of the forts, which had been left open as a common for the citizens. Knowing this would excite reclamations dangerous to your interests, and threatening their popularity both there & here, I wrote immediately to Govr. Claiborne to get him to withdraw to a certain extent (about point blank shot) from the fort, the grounds within that being necessary for the public. But in the meantime an alarm was excited in the town and they instructed their representative in Congress to claim

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for the use of the town & public the whole of the vacant lands in it's vicinity. Mr. Gallatin however effected a compromise with him by ceding the grounds next to the fort, so as to leave your claim clear to all the lands we originally contemplated for you, as formerly explained to you. I very much wished your presence there during the late conspiracy of Burr. The native inhabitants were unshaken in their

fidelity. But there was a small band of American adventurers who had fled from their debts, and who were longing to dip their hands into the mines of Mexico, enlisted in Burr's double project of attacking that country & severing our union. Had Burr had a little success in the upper country these parricides would have joined him. However the whole business has shewn that neither he nor they knew anything of the people of this country. A simple proclamation informing the people of these combinations, and calling on them to suppress them produced an instantaneous *levee en masse* of our citizens wherever there appeared anything to lay hold of, & the whole was crushed in one instant. It is certain that he never had one hundred men engaged in his enterprise, & most of these were made to believe the government patronized it. Which artifice had been practised by Miranda a short time before, and had decoyed about 30. Americans to engage in his unauthorized projects. Burr is now under trial for a misdemeanor, that is for his projected Mexican enterprise, and will be put on his trial for treason as soon as the witnesses can be collected, for his attempt to sever the Union, and unless his federal patrons give him an opportunity of running away, he will unquestionably be convicted on both prosecutions. The enterprise has done good by proving that the attachment of the people in the west is as firm as that in the East to the union of our country, and by establishing a mutual & universal confidence. Your presence at New Orleans would have been of value, as a point of union & confidence for the ancient inhabitants American as well as Creole. New Orleans itself is said to be unhealthy for strangers; but on the western side of the river is as healthy & fine a country as in the universe. Your emperor has done more splendid things, but he [has] never done one which will give happiness to so great a number of human beings as the ceding Louisiana to the U. S.

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I wrote to Madame de Tesse on the 21st of Feb and at the same time sent a box of seeds, nuts, acorns &c. to Baltimore, which were forwarded to Bordeaux for her, to the care of Mr. Lee our consul there. I had done the same thing the preceding year. That vessel was taken by the English, detained, but got to France in April. It is so difficult in times of war to get anything carried safely across the Atlantic as to be very discouraging. I shall not fail, however, to repeat my endeavours as to such objects as are in our neighborhood here, until she has a plenty of them. I am panting for retirement, but am as yet nearly two years from that goal. The general solicitations I have received to continue another term give me great consolation, but considerations public as well as personal determine me inflexibly on that measure. Permit me to place here my most friendly respects to M. & Me de Tesse, & Me. de La Fayette, accept for yourself my salutations & assurances of sincere & affectionate esteem.